



OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES DIPLOMATIC PAPERS, 1937, THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH, EUROPE, NEAR EAST AND AFRICA, VOLUME II

860C.56/235

Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

[WASHINGTON ,] October 25, 1937.

The Polish Ambassador called to see me this morning. He said that the President had asked him, during a recent conversation which the President had had with the Ambassador,⁶⁵ to come to see me with regard to the problem of Jewish emigration from Poland.

The Ambassador stated that from the conversations which Colonel Beck had recently had with the leaders of the [Page 562] Zionist movement at Geneva, prospects for canalizing emigration from Poland to Palestine were discouraging, and that, while Poland would still continue to try to work out some plan for continued Polish emigration to Palestine as the basis for their present policy, his Government was very anxious to find other fields where Jewish emigrants from Poland could be settled. He said that the Polish Government had sent commissions to Madagascar, South Africa, East Africa and Australia, but had been able to find no willingness on the part of those governments to encourage Polish-Jewish immigration. The President had mentioned to the Ambassador the possibility that certain Latin American republics might be willing to encourage the immigration of Polish Jews, and it was on this point that the Ambassador particularly wished to consult me.

I told the Ambassador that it was my impression that in recent years many of the South American republics, notably Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, had imposed stringent restrictions on foreign immigration of all kinds and that I doubted if the moment was propitious for undertaking negotiations of the character he had in mind. I said, however, that I thought that some of the northern South American republics, some of those in Central America and in the Caribbean, might be willing to encourage immigration of Polish Jews, provided it were solely for agricultural purposes, in order that government lands might be developed.

I told the Ambassador, however, that the question of financing would naturally immediately arise inasmuch as none of the governments which I had mentioned were in a position at this time to devote public funds in any considerable quantity towards getting the immigrants started in the agricultural field after their arrival. The Ambassador said he did not think this problem would present much difficulty since he had talked with several prominent American Jews in New York and had received assurances from them that they would undertake at least partial financing of the Polish immigrants.

I suggested to the Ambassador that he let me have about a week's time in order to go into the situation more thoroughly, since the matter was one on which I was definitely not informed, and that after I had had the opportunity of collecting such information on this subject as we might have in the Department, I would be happy to talk with him again in the matter.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

65. On October 21.[↵]